

HIST 429 – History of Pre-Colonial Africa

Winter 2008

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Office Hours: M-T 3:30-4:30pm; W 6-8pm
(and by appointment)

T, Th 9:40-11:00am
(Bldg. 10, Room 115)

Welcome to History 429: *History of Pre-Colonial Africa*. The purpose of this course is to introduce students to the broadest themes of African history in the era before colonization. In particular, the class will focus on social and cultural development in Africa from the emergence of earliest humans through the early nineteenth century. Among the topics we will examine are: early human history and migrations, the development of complex societies, the role of Africa in the ancient early-modern world, the rise and interaction of states and empires, and the rise of the transatlantic slave trade. This course does not require any prerequisite knowledge in African history. Readings, lectures and assignments for this course are designed to prepare students to engage intelligently with a range of literature on Africa and bring skills in line with the requirements for advanced and graduate study in African history.

Course Objectives:

- Develop understanding of the development of and interaction between pre-colonial African societies and the role those societies played in shaping the ancient and early-modern world
- Build knowledge of the significance of Africa in world history
- Build confidence in knowledge of African geography and ecology
- Develop skills in evaluating and using sources for writing history
- Develop history research and writing skills

Required Readings:

- Erik Gilbert & Jonathan Reynolds, *Africa in World History: From Prehistory to the Present*, 2nd ed. (Pearson-Prentice Hall, 2008).
- Lisa A. Lindsay, *Captives as Commodities: The Transatlantic Slave Trade* (Pearson-Prentice Hall, 2008).
- D.T. Niane, *Sundiata: An Epic of Old Mali*, 2nd ed. (Pearson-Longman, 2006).
- Robert Harms, *The Diligent: A Voyage Through the Worlds of the Slave Trade* (Basic Books, 2002).
- Maryse Conde, *Segu* (Penguin, 1996).
- On-line Reader (via course Blackboard site)

Course Requirements:

- Attendance: “Eighty percent of success is showing up.” – Woody Allen
Students are required to attend each class meeting. As the midterm and final examinations are designed to require roughly equal knowledge of the course lectures and readings, poor attendance will be reflected in poor performance in the course. If you miss a class, you are responsible for the contents of that day’s material. It is your responsibility to obtain notes of the lecture you missed from at least one of your peers. On five unannounced days during the quarter, I will take roll. Students who are present that day will receive one percentage point credit for attendance for a possible total of five percent of the final grade. This policy is in place to further reward students who come to class regularly.
- Reading: Students will be expected to keep up with the required readings for the course which are indicated in the course schedule. For the first eight weeks readings will come primarily from the Gilbert & Reynolds textbook and accompanying selections found on the on-line reader through the course Blackboard website. The final two weeks will concentrate on the Lindsay and Harms texts. Students are encouraged to begin reading *Segu* early (a rough timeline is suggested in the course schedule). Because this is an upper-division history course, the assigned readings for the course will average approximately 150 pages of text per week including the novel, *Segu*, which to be read in preparation for Essay I. Readings will account for approximately half of the material covered on the midterm and final examinations, with the remaining material derived from the lectures.
- Participation: Students are expected to demonstrate their preparation for class by participating in class discussions on course readings. I will take particular note of participation on days designated for the discussion of *Sundiata* and *Segu*.
- Examinations: The course will include a midterm and final exam. These exams will include a number of identification terms (IDs) in addition to essay questions. Possible essay questions and identification terms will be provided approximately one week in advance of each examination.
- Essays: Students will be required to write two substantial essays for this course, one on the novel, *Segu*, and one on the Atlantic slave trade. (Note that 400-level classes meet three hours per week instead of four hours in order to facilitate the preparation of individual research projects. Students are expected to spend roughly one quarter of their preparation time for this course engaged in work on these two papers.) Meeting with the instructor at least once prior to writing the research paper is highly recommended. The essay assignments for this class are as follows:

Paper I – *Segu*

Topic: Maryse Conde’s *Segu* addresses three major themes in African history: the spread of Islam, the Atlantic slave trade, and “legitimate commerce.” Discuss the impact of two of these themes on the people of Africa as depicted in Conde’s novel. Use examples from the lives of at least two characters in the novel to illustrate each of the two themes you choose. Essays must be a minimum of 8 pages and a maximum of 10 double-spaced, 12-pt.-font pages. Use parenthetical references to reference pages. Example: Nya was sad (57).

Paper II – The Atlantic Slave Trade

Topic: Lisa Lindsay's *Captives as Commodities* asks four essential questions about the transatlantic slave trade: Why did Europeans buy African slaves? Why did Africans sell slaves? How did enslaved people cope? and How did the slave trade end? In a well organized and thoughtful essay, answer two of these questions based on Robert Harms' *The Diligent*, Lisa Lindsay's *Captives as Commodities*, and one autobiography by an African who experienced the slave trade first hand from the database listed below. Essays must cite each of the three required sources listed below and need not reference any external sources (although two optional sources are also listed below). Essays must be a minimum of 10 pages and a maximum of 15 double-spaced, 12-pt.-font pages (including notes and bibliography). Use *Chicago* formatting for this essay and use footnotes.

Required Sources:

- Lisa A. Lindsay, *Captives as Commodities: The Transatlantic Slave Trade* (2008).
- Robert Harms, *The Diligent: A Voyage Through the Worlds of the Slave Trade* (2002).
- At least one autobiography from the *North American Slave Narratives* database courtesy of The University of North Carolina via <http://docsouth.unc.edu/neh/chronautobio.html>

Optional Sources:

- David Northrup, *The Atlantic Slave Trade*, 2nd ed. (Houghton Mifflin, 2001).
- Olaudah Equiano, *The Interesting Narrative of the Life of Olaudah Equiano* (Random House, 2004).

- Map Quizzes: Two map quizzes will be given: one on the physical geography of Africa and one on the political geography of modern Africa. Required information will be distributed one week prior to each quiz.

Grading:

Grading for the course will be calculated according to the following rubric:

Attendance	5%
Participation	5%
Map Quizzes (2)	10%
Essay 1 (<i>Segu</i>)	15%
Essay 2 (Slave Trade)	20%
Midterm exam	20%
Final exam	25%

Graduate Student Grading:

Graduate students will be graded according to the following rubric:

Attendance	5%
Participation	5%
Map Quizzes (2)	10%
Essay 1 (<i>Segu</i>)	15%
Essay 2 (Slave Trade)	20%
Historiographic Summaries(3)	45% *

[*Graduate students will complete three historiographic summaries, each based on any one of the six problems covered in Robert O. Collins (ed.), *Problems in African History: The Precolonial Centuries* (Princeton, NJ: Markus Wiener Publishers, 2005), ISBN 1-55876-360-0. Summaries should be 5-7 pages in length and should be submitted at the students convenience over the duration of the course (I recommend handing in one in January, one in February, and one in March, although the precise timeline is at each student's discretion.) Graduate students are responsible for obtaining this text through interlibrary loan or by purchasing it (for about \$25). Consult me for details on preparation of these summaries.]

Course Policies:

- **Cellular Phones:** All cellular telephones and pagers must be switched completely off or to “silent” (NOT vibrate) mode prior to entering the classroom. Please do not wait until you have entered the classroom to grace us with the ring tone that accompanies powering down your phone. Students who repeatedly disrupt class with their cell phones will be withdrawn from the course. Students who need to leave pagers on for emergency reasons (e.g., EMTs) should notify the instructor during the first days of class.
- **Laptop Computers:** Students are permitted to use laptop computers for note-taking in the classroom provided that all internet connections, audio, and video components are switched off. As a courtesy to those around you, if your computer makes noise when switched on, please start your computer outside of the classroom or mute your speakers. Students who use laptops to e-mail, internet-message, or browse the internet during class will be asked to leave. Repeat offenders and students found to be displaying inappropriate material on their screens will be withdrawn from the course.
- **Recording Lectures:** The audio recording of lectures is prohibited without the prior written consent of the instructor.
- **Late Work:** The late submission of course assignments is discouraged and will be penalized according to the following policy: 1 day late (includes any assignment submitted after the beginning of class on the day it is due) = score reduced by 10%; 2-6 days late (assignments submitted more than one day late but less than a week following the submission deadline) = score reduced by 20%; 7 or more days late = score reduced by 30%. Make-up midterm and final exams may be scheduled with permission of the professor in the event of an emergency.

Course Schedule:

Schedule is tentative: changes will be made as necessary and will be posted on Blackboard.

Week 1 Readings: Gilbert/Reynolds, xvii-xx; photo essay I (120-121); Online Reader

Tuesday	Jan. 8	(1)	Introduction
Thursday	Jan. 10	(2)	Approaching African History • Discussion of <i>Mistaking Africa</i> (see Blackboard)

Week 2 Readings: Gilbert/Reynolds, chapt. 1-2; Online Reader

Tuesday	Jan. 15	(3)	Africa and Human Origins
Thursday	Jan. 17	(4)	Physical Context of African History

Week 3 Readings: Gilbert/Reynolds, chapt. 3-4; Online Reader

Tuesday	Jan. 22	(5)	Settled Life: Food, Technology & Migration
Thursday	Jan. 23	(6)	North & Northeast Africa in Early World History

Week 4 Readings: Gilbert/Reynolds, chapt. 4-5; *Segu*, part 1, Online Reader

Tuesday	Jan. 29	(7)	North & Northeast Africa in Early World History
Thursday	Jan. 31	(8)	Africa & the Early Christian World

Week 5 Readings: Gilbert/Reynolds, chapt. 6; *Sundiata*, 1-84; Online Reader

Tuesday	Feb. 5	(9)	North & West Africa & the Spread of Islam
Thursday	Feb. 7	(10)	North & West Africa & the Spread of Islam • Discussion of <i>Sundiata</i>

Week 6 Readings: Gilbert/Reynolds, chapt. 7; *Segu*, part 2; Online Reader

Tuesday	Feb. 12	(11)	East Africa & the Advent of Islam
Thursday	Feb. 14		• Midterm Exam (bring blue book)

Week 7 Readings: Gilbert/Reynolds, chapt. 9-10; *Segu*, Part 3; Online Reader

Tuesday	Feb. 19	(12)	West and Central Africa, 1500-1800
Thursday	Feb. 21	(13)	North Africa & the Soudan, 1500-1800

Week 8 Readings: Gilbert/Reynolds, chapt. 11-12; *Segu*, Part 4-5; Online Reader

Tuesday	Feb. 26	(14)	East Africa, 1500-1800
Thursday	Feb. 28	(15)	Southern Africa, 1500-1800

Week 9 Readings: Lindsay, 1-83; Harms, 3-196; Online Reader

Tuesday	Mar. 4	(16)	• Discussion of <i>Segu</i> • Essay 1 due in class
Thursday	Mar. 6	(17)	Slavery & the Making of the Atlantic World

Week 10 Readings: Lindsay, 84-164; Harms, 199-410; Online Reader

Tuesday	Mar. 11	(18)	Slavery & the Making of the Atlantic World
Thursday	Mar. 13	(19)	Slavery & the Making of the Atlantic World
Friday	Mar. 14		• Essay 2 due by 5pm in my office (47-25F)

Final Exam

Thursday	Mar. 20	10:10am – 1:00pm	(bring blue book)
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